

Inquiring Minds: Facing One's Fears

#32 Dec. 2014 "Man cannot control the current of events, he can only float with them and steer" – Otto von Bismarck

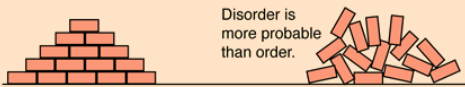
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TO BE CONTROLLING OR TO GO WITH THE FLOW IS MY DILEMMA WHEN FEARFUL...

We all want control of our lives, and control is a good and necessary thing: for achievement, prosperity, social, mental, and spiritual well-being. It's true that a certain routine was and is necessary for me to realize some of my life-long goals. One problem I have encountered lately, however, especially when I get out of sync, is that I want to make life even more predictable and more controllable. I tend to over-state my wishes and desires according to the ideal world I have set up in my mind. I also find myself pre-judging how an upcoming event is going to be, even sometimes not attending it because of my negative projections.

Examining this further, I see that aging is often the culprit. Resistance to entropy, the break down and disorganization of all

If you tossed bricks off a truck, which kind of pile of bricks would you more likely produce?



(human) systems--the loss of control--propels me (and maybe some of you) to seek more control, the instinct to survive. This seems a natural response. The danger is to overdo it, trying to play the conductor of the many and varied people and circumstances which come into our lives. Making the world revolve around oneself is not only egotistical, but short-sighted, impractical and limiting. Yet that's the temptation when one is fearful of aging and dying. Of course this is the extreme, and I am quickly brought in check by those close enough around me to kick me in the pants of my unrealistic expectations. This is oftentimes my spouse who, like my dad did to my

mom over the years, challenges me to think beyond my fear-tainted projections.

In the face of this tendency of mine I have to arm myself with a more positive philosophy or even a mantra or prayer to help me live life to the fullest while I still can.

ONE SUCH PHILOSOPHY IS IN THE SERENITY PRAYER

This prayer seems to be universally accepted and used in many programs including the various 12-step programs as AA, CODA, etc., as well adopted by the Federal Council of Churches (FCC) book for army chaplains and servicemen in 1944. The saying of it seems to remind me or set the intention of how I want to live my life, even more so than imploring a distant deity to make it happen for me.

One of several renditions, this is my favorite:

*God, grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot
change,
Courage to change the things I
can,
And the wisdom to know the
difference--
Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time,
Accepting hardships as a pathway
to peace...*

This prayer was generally thought to be written by Reinhold Niebuhr in the early 1940's and extended and modified. As discussed in the [Wikipedia article](#), the idea is not new. An 8th-century Indian Buddhist scholar said it this way:

*If there's a remedy when trouble strikes,
What reason is there for dejection?*

*And if there is no help for it,
What use is there in being glum?*

The philosopher [W.W. Bartley](#) in 1950 expressing a similar sentiment:

*For every ailment under the sun
There is a remedy, or there is none;
If there be one, try to find it;
If there be none, never mind it.*

WHY INTERSTELLAR WAS NOT SUCH A STELLAR MOVIE FOR ME

First, I felt the message given by the movie in seeking to emigrate to another planet was defeatist. Second, such an effort would require huge cooperation, yet the movie was filled with all sorts of non-cooperation, deceit, and betrayal. Third, it came down to one man jumping through all sorts of improbable hoops to save the human race. Fourth, I prefer stories of real heros, many of which abound but are unknown.

FOUR FAVORITE MOVIES INVOLVING REAL HEROES

Boston prodigy [William Sidis](#) (IQ=250-300) the role model for Will Hunting: accepted to MIT at age 8; Harvard mathematics age 16, law school age 17.

We just watched again *Good Will Hunting*, the true story about a genius, William Sidis, who was helped by a psychologist (Robin Williams) who in real life was Will's own father. The similarities between Damon and Will Sidis and his father, Boris Sidis, are amazing. [Read more.](#)

The Theory of Everything about the life of Stephen Hawking was good look at the man's personal life and struggles. Also, *Unbroken*.

We hope to see *The Imitation Game*, the true story of Alan Turing who cracked the German code in WWII, but was attacked because of his homosexuality.

-Peace and Happy Holidays, Joe

